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ΙΝΣΤΙΤΟΥΤΟ ΙΣΤΟΡΙΚΩΝ ΕΡΕΥΝΩΝ
ΤΟΜΕΑΣ ΒΥΖΑΝΤΙΝΩΝ ΕΡΕΥΝΩΝ
ΕΘΝΙΚΟ ΙΔΡΥΜΑ ΕΡΕΥΝΩΝ



ΒΥΖΑΝΤΙΝΑ ΣΥΜΜΕΙΚΤΑ

BYZANTINA SYMMEIKTA

ΤΟΜΟΣ 29 VOLUME

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A FUNERARY INSCRIPTION OF CHILBUDIUS,
MAGISTER MILITUM PER THRACIAM?

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A FUNERARY INSCRIPTION OF CHILBUDIUS,
MAGISTER MILITUM PER THRACIAM?*

The very limited information pertaining to the activity of Chilbudius, *magister militum per Thraciam* (c. 530-533), is related to the first encounters of the Byzantines with the early Slavs in the Lower Danube. The early Slavs (Sclaveni and Antes) appeared in the area most likely towards the end of emperor Anastasius' reign (491-518). The Slavic tribes that settled to the north of the Lower Danube and were conducting attacks to the south of the river were those with whom initially the Byzantines came into contact. Those first contacts resulted in mentions of the Slavs in Byzantine sources, where the image of a barbarian people is also reflected¹. The first Antic attack against Byzantium, which was intercepted by the general of Thrace Germanus, dates back to the era of Justin, in 518². According to Procopius,

* The authors would like to thank all those who helped through discussion on the issue or provided material, and especially Dr. Maria Xenaki, as well as the anonymous reviewers.

1. G. SCHRAMM, Venedi, Antes, Sclaveni, Slavi: Frühe Sammelbezeichnungen für slawische Stämme und ihr geschichtlicher Hintergrund, *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 43 (1995), 172; G. KARDARAS, *Οι Άντες. Ιστορία και πολιτισμός (4ος-8ος αι.)*, Athens 2016, 47. IDEM, A re-approach of Procopius' ethnographic account on the early Slavs, *ByzSym* 27 (2017), 239; On the early Byzantine ethnography and its emphasis on the difference between Romans and barbarians see A. KALDELLIS, *Ethnography after Antiquity. Foreign Lands and Peoples in Byzantine Literature*, Philadelphia 2013, 1-25.

2. Procopius, *Wars*, 7.40.3-6, eds. J. HAURY – P. WIRTH, *Procopii Caesariensis Opera Omnia*, v. 2 (De Bellis libri V-VIII), Leipzig 1963, 476. The year usually mentioned in bibliography is 518: H. DITTEN, Zur Bedeutung der Einwanderung der Slawen, in: *Byzanz im 7. Jahrhundert. Untersuchungen zur Herausbildung des Feudalismus*, eds. F. WINKELMANN – H. KÖPSTEIN, Berlin 1978, 86, with fn. 2; B. FERJANČIĆ, Invasions et installation des Slaves

during the early reign of Justinian, the entire area of the Balkans suffered devastating raids of the Sclaveni, the Antes and the steppe nomads³. Frequent raids of those peoples are also recorded by Jordanes⁴.

Before the war against the Vandals in 533, Justinian tried to intercept the raids of the Sclaveni and the Antes, as well as the nomads' incursions. The emperor appointed Chilbudius general of Thrace in 530/31, in order to protect the Danube frontier⁵. In three years' time, not only did Chilbudius

dans les Balkans, in: *Villes et peuplement dans l'Illyricum protobyzantin. Actes du colloque organisé par l'École française de Rome (Rome, 12-14 mai 1982)*, Rome 1984, 88 (518-527); G. G. LITAVRIN, *O dvukh Khilbudakh Prokopija Kesarijskogo*, VV 47 (1986), 30 (in 527); O. M. PRIKHODNIUK, *Anti ta Vizantiia, Arkheologiia* (Kiev) 2 (1991), 135; F. CURTA, *The Making of the Slavs: History and Archaeology of the Lower Danube Region, c. 500-700*, Cambridge 2001, 75-76, fn. 7; P. M. BARFORD, *The Early Slavs. Culture and Society in Early Medieval Eastern Europe*, New York 2001, 50; G. KARDARAS, *The Byzantine-Antic treaty (545/56 A.D.) and the defense of Scythia Minor*, BSl 68 (2010), 74; IDEM, *Άντες*, 83. Cf. A. SARANTIS, *Justinian's Balkan Wars: Campaigning, Diplomacy and Development in Illyricum, Thrace and the Northern World A.D. 527-65*, Prenton 2016, 84, with n. 341-342, who justified a later date for the event (between 520 and 527).

3. Procopius, *Secret History*, 18.20-21, eds. J. HAURY – P. WIRTH, *Procopii Caesariensis Opera Omnia*, v. 3 (Historia Arcana), Leipzig 1963, 114-115; *Idem*, *Wars*, 7.14.2, 353-354; DITTEN, *Einwanderung*, 86; FERJANČIĆ, *Invasions*, 92; PRIKHODNIUK, *Anti*, 135; CURTA, *Slavs*, 78-79; BARFORD, *Early Slavs*, 50; KARDARAS, *Treaty*, 75; IDEM, *Άντες*, 85.

4. Jordanes, *Romana (De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum)*, 388, ed. TH. MOMMSEN, *Iordanis, Romana et Getica* [MGH AA 5/1], Berlin 1882, 52: *Hi sunt casus Romanae rei publicae preter instantia cottidiana Bulgarum, Antium et Sclavinorum que si quis scire cupit, annales consulumque seriem revolvat sine fastidio repperietque dignam nostri temporis rem publicam tragedydiae*. F. CURTA, *Hiding Behind a Piece of Tapestry: Jordanes and the Slavic Venethi*, *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 47 (1999), 331; IDEM, *Slavs*, 79; KARDARAS, *Treaty*, 75; IDEM, *Άντες*, 85-86.

5. Following J. R. MARTINDALE, *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire (PLRE)*, v. 3A (A.D. 527-641), Cambridge 1992, 286 (Chilbudius 1), Chilbudius replaced Mundus as *magister militum per Thraciam*, but this seems to be a mistake, because Mundus was at this time *magister militum per Illyricum*; see also J. R. MARTINDALE, *PLRE*, v. 3B (A.D. 527-641), Cambridge 1992, 903-905 (Mundus). Regarding the title of Hilbudius, the scholars prefer either the form *magister militum per Thraciam* or *per Thracias*. However, both forms seem to be correct, as they attested in the sources. See *Notitia Dignitatum*, ed. O. SEECK, Berlin 1876, Or. VIII, 23-26: (*Insignia viri illustris magistri militum per Thracias*); *Marcellini Comitis Chronicon*, ed. TH. MOMMSEN [MGH, AA 11, *Chronica Minora* 2], Berlin 1894 (1961), 99 (515, 4: ... *magister militum Vitalianus per Thraciam*.)

manage to defend the frontier, but also to attack the *barbarians* north of the river, where he lost his life in 533, while fighting the Sclaveni⁶. Procopius notes that after Chilbudius' death, the Danube frontier was not a serious obstacle for the invaders who could easily attack the Byzantine territory⁷. In 533, due to Chilbudius' military successes, Justinian gave himself the title *Anticus* for first time. The title remained in use by the Byzantine emperors until 612⁸.

Procopius' evidence on the Byzantine-Antic treaty of 545/46 and his ethnographic account on the early Slavs are accompanied by the narration about the so-called episode of the phoney Chilbudius: an Antic captive of the Sclaveni⁹, also Chilbudius by name, was later sent by the Antes to the

6. Procopius, *Wars*, 7.14.2-3, eds. HAURY - WIRTH, 353-354: τοῦτον βασιλεὺς τὸν Χιλβούδιον, ὅτε δὴ τέταρτον ἔτος τὴν αὐτοκράτορα εἶχεν ἀρχὴν, Θράκης στρατηγὸν ἀνελπὼν, ἐπὶ τῇ τοῦ Ἰστρου ποταμοῦ φυλακῇ κατεστήσατο, φυλάσσειν κελεύσας ὅπως μηκέτι τοῖς ταύτη βαρβάροις ὁ ποταμὸς διαβατὸς ἔσται, ἐπεὶ αὐτοῦ τὴν διάβασιν πολλάκις ἤδη Οὔννοι τε καὶ Ἄνται καὶ Σκλαβηνοὶ πεποιημένοι ἀνήκεστα Ῥωμαίους ἔργα εἰργάσαντο. Χιλβούδιος δὲ οὕτω τοῖς βαρβάροις φοβερός γέγονεν ὥστε ἐς τριῶν ἐνιαυτῶν χρόνον, ὅσον ξὺν ταύτῃ δὴ τῇ τιμῇ τὴν διατριβὴν ἐνταῦθα εἶχεν, οὐχ ὅσον διαβῆναι τὸν Ἰστρον ἐπὶ τοὺς Ῥωμαίους οὐδεὶς ἴσχυσεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ Ῥωμαῖοι ἐς ἡπειρον τὴν ἀντιπέρασιν σὺν Χιλβουδίῳ πολλάκις ἰόντες ἔκτεινάν τε καὶ ἠνδραπόδισαν τοὺς ταύτη βαρβάρους; *Suidae Lexicon*, ed. A. ADLER, v. 4, Leipzig 1935 (Stuttgart 1971), 302/805 (Χιβούλδιος/Chibuldius); Ć. BONEV, Les Antes et Byzance, *EtBalk* 19/3 (1983), 109-112; LITAVRIN, O dvukh Khilbudakh, 24; PRIKHODNIUK, *Anti*, 135-136; CURTA, *Slavs*, 76; BARFORD, *Early Slavs*, 51; A. SARANTIS, Military Encounters and Diplomatic Affairs in the North Balkans during the Reigns of Anastasius and Justinian, in: *War and Warfare in Late Antiquity*, eds. A. SARANTIS - N. CHRISTIE, Leiden - Boston 2013, 768, 771, 776, 787-788; IDEM, *Balkan Wars*, 84, 87, 109, 147, 247-249, 284 (mentioning the year 534); KARDARAS, *Άντες*, 84; see also *PLRE*, v. 3A, 286-287 (Chilbudius 1).

7. Procopius, *Wars*, 7.14.6, eds. HAURY - WIRTH, 354: καὶ τὸ λοιπὸν ὁ τε ποταμὸς ἐσβατὸς ἀεὶ τοῖς βαρβάροις κατ' ἐξουσίαν καὶ τὰ Ῥωμαίων πράγματα εὐέφοδα γέγονε, ξύμπασά τε ἡ Ῥωμαίων ἀρχὴ ἀνδρὸς ἐνὸς ἀρετῇ ἀντίρροπος γενέσθαι ἐν τῷ ἔργῳ τοῦτω οὐδαμῇ ἴσχυσε. CURTA, *Slavs*, 76; KARDARAS, *Άντες*, 84-85.

8. On the references of the title see G. RÖSCH, *Όνομα Βασιλείας. Studien zum offiziellen Gebrauch der Kaisertitel in spätantiker und frühbyzantinischer Zeit*, Wien 1978, 101-103, 167-168; S. A. IVANOV, Anty v titulature vizantiiskikh imperatorov, in: *Svod drevneishikh pis'mennykh izvestii o slavianakh*, v. 1, eds. L. A. GINDIN - G. G. LITAVRIN, Moscow 1994, 260-264, where a detailed record of the references; KARDARAS, *Άντες*, 163-170; SARANTIS, *Balkan Wars*, 86.

9. Procopius, *Wars*, 7.14.8, eds. HAURY - WIRTH, 354: ἐν ταύτῃ δὲ τῇ μάχῃ Σκλαβηνὸς ἀνὴρ τῶν τινα πολεμίων ἄρτι γενειάσκοντα, Χιλβούδιον ὄνομα, αἰχμάλωτον εἶλεν, ἐς τε τὰ οἰκεῖα λαβὼν ὄχετο.

Byzantines as envoy, pretending to be the already died in the battlefield *magister militum per Thraciam*¹⁰. Procopius' narration certainly demonstrates many influences from classical literature. As Florin Curta points out, "the episode of the 'phoney Chilbudius' betrays the influence of the neo-Attic comedy and, possibly, of Plautus. There is also a weak echo of Thucydides where Procopius claims that he had written about buildings which he had seen himself, or heard described by others who had seen them"¹¹. What we consider important for our topic is that Procopius explicitly refers to that captive as a native Antian. That reference led some scholars to believe that, on the basis of the common name, the Byzantine general Chilbudius too was of Antic (Slavic) descent and the name itself must be a Slavic one. Initially, P. J. Šafárik suggested the name *Chwalut*, but his theory did not convince the academic community and was evidently forgotten¹². Much later, T. Maretić was the first to suggest that the name *Χιλβούδιος* was a misspelled form of *Μιλβούδιος*, the Slavic Milbud, "which is a real Slavic name", and this latter option was adopted by several modern scholars¹³. A third suggestion

10. Procopius, *Wars*, 7.13.26; 7.14.8-21, 31, 34-36, eds. HAURY – WIRTH, 353-357, 359-360. BONEV, *Les Antes*, 110-111; LITAVRIN, *O dvukh Khilbudakh*, 24-30; CURTA, *Slavs*, 79-83, 331-332; BARFORD, *Early Slavs*, 51; B. S. SZMONIEWSKI, *The Antes: Eastern 'Brothers' of the Slavenes?*, in: *Neglected Barbarians*, ed. F. CURTA, Turnhout 2010, 65; KARDARAS, *Άντες*, 100-102; SARANTIS, *Balkan Wars*, 248-249; see also, *PLRE*, v. 3A, 287 (Chilbudius 2).

11. CURTA, *Slavs*, 36, 79, 349.

12. P. J. SCHAFFARIK, *Über die Abkunft der Slawen nach Lorenz Surowiecki*, Ofen (Budapest) 1828, 147. Cf. F. PALACKÝ, *Über die Abkunft der Slawen, nach Schaffarik*, *Monatschrift der Gesellschaft des vaterländischen Museums in Böhmen* 3 (1829), 498: "Chilbudius (Chwalut?)".

13. T. MARETIĆ, *Slaveni u davnini*, Zagreb 1889, 34-35, 253 (this name, however, despite the author's claim, is not attested in any source or dictionary); *Vizantiski izvori za istoriju naroda Jugoslavije*, v. 1, eds. F. BARISIC et al., Beograd 1955, 23; H. DITTEN, *Slawen im byzantinischen Heer von Justinian I. bis Justinian II.*, in: *Studien zum 7. Jahrhundert in Byzanz. Probleme der Herausbildung des Feudalismus*, eds. H. KÖPSTEIN – F. WINLELMANN, Berlin 1976, 78. Other scholars accept Chilbudius' Antic/Slavic origin (with or without reservations), but without commenting on his name; see BONEV, *Les Antes*, 109, n. 4; FERJANČIĆ, *Invasions*, 88; LITAVRIN, *O dvukh Khilbudakh*, 25, 27-30; S. A. IVANOV – L. A. GINDIN – V. L. TSYMBURSKII, *Prokopii Kesariiskii*, in: *Svod* [as in n.8], 215; T. ŽIVKOVIĆ, *Forging Unity. The South Slavs between East and West: 550-1150*, Belgrade 2008, 34; KARDARAS, *Άντες*, 103-104; D. A. PARNELL, *Justinian's Men: Careers and Relationships of Byzantine Army Officers*, 518-610, London 2017, 44.

came from S. Rospond, who wrote about the form *Chvalibud*, but this view found no supporters either¹⁴. Some accepted the Slavic etymology of the name (without specifying the form), but not the Slavic origin of Chilbudius himself¹⁵, while others rejected the Slavic connection in general, though without providing any further explanation or evidence for an alternative theory¹⁶. G. Schramm, on the other hand, stated that the name has no clear origin (neither Slavic, nor Germanic, nor Iranian)¹⁷.

Another hypothesis about Chilbudius' origin was promoted by those scholars who saw a Germanic element in his name and its etymology (< Hildebod or *Hil(i)būdeis). From a linguistic point of view, it seems to be more plausible. The first component is *hildi (in Gothic) or *hiltja / *hiltia (in Old High German), which means "battle". The second component comes from another word in Old High German, bodo/boto (Indo-European stem *bheudh- / *bhoudh- / *bhudh-), meaning "messenger". The earliest Germanic names which are the closest to the one mentioned above are attested in medieval Latin texts: *Hildebotus*, *Hiltbotus*, *Hildibodo* and *Hillibodus*¹⁸.

14. S. ROSPOND, Słowiańskie imiona w źródłach antycznych, *Lingua Posnaniensis* 12-13 (1968), 103-104; Cf. IVANOV – GINDIN – TSYMBURSKII, Prokopii Kesariiskii, 215; B. STRUMINS'KYI, Were the Antes Eastern Slavs?, in: *Eucharisterion: Essays presented to Omeljan Pritsak on his Sixtieth Birthday by his Colleagues and Students*, eds. I. SHEVCHENKO – F. E. SYSYN, with the assistance of U. M. PASICZNYK (*Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 3/4 (1979-1980)), 790.

15. M. Iu. BRAICHEVSKII, K istorii rasselenija slavjan na vizantijskikh zemljakh, VV 19 (1961), 129.

16. CURTA, *Slavs*, 76 (see also: 36, 78-81). The author regards the episode of the phoney Chilbudius as of no historical value, yet he offers no alternative solution about the real identity of Chilbudius the magister, whose Slavic origin he apparently rejected ("Misled by Procopius' story of Chilbudius' Antian namesake, many historians believe the magister militum per Thraciam was of Slavic origin"). See also: IVANOV – GINDIN – TSYMBURSKII, Prokopii Kesariiskii, 231-232; KARDARAS, *Ἀντίεξ*, 106. It must be stressed here that there is a difference between: a) describing a real event by using a style which imitates the classical authors, b) commenting on events that took place in Antiquity and, c) inventing imaginary stories, inspired by Classical texts. The latter does not appear in Procopius' works.

17. SCHRAMM, *Venedi*, 175-176; IDEM, *Ein Damm bricht: Die römische Donaugrenze und die Invasionen des 5.-7. Jahrhunderts im Lichte von Namen und Wörtern*, Munich 1997, 182.

18. See: E. FÖRSTEMANN, *Altdeutsches Namenbuch*, v. 1, Bonn 1900, 824-825; IVANOV – GINDIN – TSYMBURSKII, Prokopii Kesariiskii, 215; STRUMINS'KYI, Eastern Slavs, 790-791, who dates the Latin forms Hildibodo and Hillibodo in the 7th c. and suggests the reconstruction

What we see in Procopius' text is, of course, a corrupted form (Χιλβούδιος), adapted to the phonetic peculiarities of the Greek-speaking writer. We may assume, then, that the general Chilbudius had Antic origin, likely a mixed Slavic-Germanic background¹⁹. We should e.g. take into account that, according to Jordanes, both the Sclaveni and the Antes were under Ostrogothic rule from c. 370 to 375/76²⁰. Moreover, linguistic evidence shows strong Germanic influence in the anthroponymy of the Protoslavs in that period²¹, while the archaeological finds testify certain contacts of the Gothic Cherniakhov culture with the Kiev and Penkovka cultures, related to the early Slavs²².

In the year 1900 (or shortly before), a tombstone dating back to Justinian's era and mentioning a certain Χιλβούδη (Chilibudis) came to light during works at a private house in the Phanar area of Constantinople.

of the name as *Hil(i)būdeis. The editors of the electronic dictionary for medieval names (Durham University, UK), however, noted that the earliest recorded forms (Hildebotus, Hiltbodus, Hildibodo and Hillibodon, the last one in ablative case) are dated from the period between 822 and 875: "Hildebod", in: *The Dictionary of Medieval Names from European Sources*, ed. S. L. UCKELMAN (Edition 2016, no. 4) [=http://dmnes.org/2016/4/name/Hildebod (7 Oct. 2016) (access date: 8 March 2017)]. See also: SARANTIS, *Balkan Wars*, 84, with fn. 344 ("probably of Germanic descent judging by his name"), 110 ("the Thracian general Chilbudius" – this must be a typographical mistake for the general of Thrace, because he was certainly not of Thracian origin), 136 as well as A. IZDEBSKI, *The Slavs' political institutions and the Byzantine policies* (ca. 530-650), *BSI* 69 (2011), 53, who implies that Chilbudius is a Germanic name, although he does not comment further on this issue.

19. IZDEBSKI, *Political institutions*, 53.

20. Jordanes, *Getica* (*De origine actibusque Getarum*), ed. MOMMSEN (as in n. 4), XXIII, 119, 89; ibidem, LXVIII, 247, 121; R. WERNER, *Zur Herkunft der Anten. Ein ethnisches und sozialen Problem der Spätantike*, in: *Studien zur antiken Sozialgeschichte. Festschrift Friedrich Vittinghoff*, eds. W. ECK – H. GALSTERER – H. WOLFF, Wien 1980, 577-578; C. GOEHRKE, *Frühzeit des Ostslaventums*, Darmstadt 1992, 67; M. KAZANSKI, *Les relations entre les Slaves et les Goths du IIIe au Ve siècle: l'apport de l'archéologie*, *Revue des Etudes Slaves* 65/1 (1993), 8-9, 13-14; SCHRAMM, *Venedi*, 169; CURTA, *Venethi*, 325, 331-332; M. ŠČUKIN – M. KAZANSKI – O. SHAROV, *De les goths aux huns: Le nord de la mer noire au Bas-empire et à l'époque des grandes migrations*, Oxford 2006, 152-154; SZMONIEWSKI, *Antes*, 63, n. 52; KARDARAS, *Άντες*, 56-57.

21. SCHRAMM, *Ein Damm bricht*, 182; KARDARAS, *Άντες*, 55.

22. See ŠČUKIN – M. KAZANSKI – O. SHAROV, *Mer noire*, 154-155; KARDARAS, *Άντες*, 121-122.

The discovery of the inscription was (allegedly) presented in the daily press of Constantinople, and more specifically in the French newspaper *Le Moniteur Oriental*. The Bulgarian epigraphist Jordan Ivanov was the first (and actually the only one) to notice this news and a few months (?) later, he published a short paper on that inscription²³.

Before proceeding to the historical commentary and the interpretation suggested by J. Ivanov, one should note that: a) the scholar does not mention the issue of the newspaper in which the inscription was reported or rather published; b) he provides neither photographs, nor drawings of the inscription, which most likely he had never seen and his study was based on the text presented in the newspaper²⁴; c) the fact that J. Ivanov insisted that the inscription would soon disappear means that no service or institution showed any interest in the preservation of the monument. Indeed, the inscription has not been indexed in any subsequent *corpus*, nor has any scholar ever seen it. Furthermore, it should be noted that all who eventually dealt with this inscription, cited Ivanov's article only, without any reference either to the monument itself, or to the French-speaking Constantinopolitan newspaper. Unfortunately, the only piece of information provided by Ivanov about the alleged publication in *Le Moniteur Oriental* is that the newspaper issue appeared "five months ago". Based on this and given that his article was printed in the first issue of volume 62, in 1901 (and not in 1902, as it is widely and erroneously cited throughout the relevant bibliography), we searched for the newspaper issue in question even in Ivanov's personal archive, kept today at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, but in vain. The text of the inscription (according to his publication) reads as follows:²⁵

23. I. IVANOV, Nadgrobniiat nadpis na Khilvuda, *Periodichesko spisanie na balgarsko knizhovno druzhestvo v Sofiia* 62/1 (1901), 63-65.

24. Of the same opinion is I. DUCHEV, Balkanskiat Iugoiztok prez parvata polovina na VI vek. Nachalni slavianski napadeniia, *Belomorski Pregled* 1 (1942), 249, fn. 2. One more explanation is that the Bulgarian epigraphist got the information not directly from the newspaper but through an informative letter sent by someone living in Constantinople. If this is the case, then we must suspect that the sender (probably a non-expert) may have provided vague information about the date of the newspaper issue or he may even have erroneously transcribed part of the inscription. The same may be true, of course, about the person who provided the newspaper with the reading.

25. IVANOV, Nadpis na Khilvuda, 64.

ΕΝΘΑΔΕ
 ΚΑΤΑ ΚΕΙΤΕ
 ΧΙΛΙΒΟΥ
 ΔΙΟΚΟΥ
 ΚΑΝΒΑΤΙΟΥ
 ΙΟΥ ΤΕΛΕΥΤΑ ΜΗΝΙΝΟΥ
 ΕΝΒΡΕΠΙΟΥ ΚΗ ΙΝΔΙΣΣ
 ΓΑΜΕΤΗ ΧΙ + ΛΙΒΟΥΔΙ
 ΟΥ

“Here lays Chilibudis, son of Sanbatius, (who) died in November 28, Indiction 7th. The wife of Chilibudius”.

The form ΧΙΛΙΒΟΥΔΙΟΚΟΥ presented in this inscription (ll. 3-4) is, from a phonetic point of view, closer to the Germanic one, when compared to that recorded by Procopius, because it maintains the vowel *ι* between the consonants *λ* and *β*, according to the original Germanic form (see above, especially the comments by Strumins’kij). In addition, one may notice that the suffix has not been Latinized (*-ις* / *-ης* instead of *-ιος*, in ll. 3-4), while the *d/t* of the first component has been omitted, after it had been converted to *λ*, according to the Latin form *Hillibodus* mentioned above.

The inscription offers two pieces of evidence which render a possible connection with Chilbudius the *magister militum per Thraciam*. First, the mention of ΚΑΝΒΑΤΙΟΥΚΟΥ (Sanbatios/Sabbatios, modern Sabbath)²⁶ as the name of his father. Ivanov interpreted this as a proof that Chilbudius was of Slavic origin, because Emperor Justinian’s father was also named Sabbatios and (according to Ivanov) was a Slav. This specific theory is rejected already in the detailed study of M.B. Petrovich, and, furthermore, never

26. About the name see: I. A. LEVINSKAYA – S. R. TOKHTAS’YEV, Jews and Jewish names in the Bosphoran Kingdom, in: *Studies on the Jewish diaspora in the Hellenistic and Roman periods*, eds. B. ISAAC – A. OPPENHEIMER, Tel-Aviv 1996, 60-63; O. MAZAL, *Justinian I. und seine Zeit. Geschichte und Kultur des Byzantinischen Reiches im 6. Jahrhundert*, Köln – Weimar – Wien 2001, 55, who relates the name with that of the Thracian Sabazios. Cf. IVANOV, *Nadpis na Khilvuda*, 64 (Old Bulgarian name). Yet another view can be seen in: ROSPOND, *Słowiańskie imiona*, 104 (Slavic name).

became popular in historiography²⁷. On the other hand, it is important to note that among Chilbudius' contemporaries, Sabbatius was the name not only of Justinian's father, but also of the Emperor Justinian himself, his full name being *Flavius Petrus Sabbatius Iustinianus*²⁸. As W. Holmes points out, "as soon as young Sabbatius, for the nephew of Justin bore his father's name, had arrived at a suitable age, he was invited to the capital by his uncle ... Finally, Justin legally adopted Sabbatius; and in token of the fact, the latter assumed the derivative name of Justinian"²⁹. It is very important, thus, that Procopius notes that Chilbudius was someone *from the emperor Justinian's house* (ἐκ τῆς Ἰουστινιανοῦ βασιλέως οἰκίας). According to G. Litavrin, Chilbudius emerged in the environment of the emperor and he was loyal to the latter, himself being an Antian of a low-class descent³⁰. It is very likely, then, that in the inscription appears Justinian's name, since the emperor probably adopted Chilbudius in a case of *adoptio per arma* (adoption – in – arms), a well-known practice between Romans and barbarians³¹. About the circumstances that led Chilbudius to the court of Justinian, we may assume that the future *magister militum per Thraciam* had fallen into the hands of the Byzantines after the victory of Germanus

27. M. B. PETROVICH, How Justinian became a Slav: the story of a forgery, *BalkSt* 8/1 (1967), 1-28.

28. Procopius, *Secret History*, 12.18 ed. HAURY, 80: Λέγουσι δὲ αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν μητέρα φάναι τῶν ἐπιτηδείων τισὶν ὡς οὐ Σαββατίου τοῦ αὐτῆς ἀνδρὸς οὐδὲ ἀνθρώπων τινὸς υἱὸς εἶη; Theophanes Confessor, *Chronographia*, ed. C. DE BOOR, v. 1, Leipzig 1883 (Hildesheim 1963), 183: Σαββάτης. The full name of the emperor (Flavius Petrus Sabbatius Iustinianus) appears only in the consular diptychs of the year 521. See *PLRE*, v. 2, Cambridge 1980, 966; J. A. S. EVANS, *The Age of Justinian: The Circumstances of Imperial Power*, London – New York 1996, 286, fn. 2.

29. W. G. HOLMES, *The Age of Justinian and Theodora. A History of the Sixth Century A.D.*, v. 1, London 1912, 301-302.

30. Procopius, *Wars*, 7.14.1, eds. HAURY – WIRTH, 353: Χιλβούδιος ἦν τις ἐκ τῆς Ἰουστινιανοῦ βασιλέως οἰκίας ἐσάγαν μὲν δραστήριος τὰ πολέμια, ἐς τόσον δὲ χρημάτων κρείσσων ὥστε ἀντὶ μεγίστου κτήματος ἐν τῇ οὐσίᾳ τῇ αὐτοῦ εἶχε τὸ κεκτηῖσθαι μηδὲν. LITAVRIN, O dvukh Khilbudakh, 25-27, 30. See also IVANOV – GINDIN – TSYMBURSKII, *Prokopii Kesariiskii*, 214; CURTA, *Slavs*, 76, fn. 7; KARDARAS, Ἄντες, 103-104.

31. See G. ALTHOFF, *Verwandte, Freunde und Getreue: zum politischen Stellenwert der Gruppenbindungen im frühen Mittelalter*, Darmstadt 1990, 89; A. GILLET, *Envoys and Political Communication in the Late Antique West, 411-533*, Cambridge 2003, 253-254.

the general over the Antes in 518³², being, we believe, a young chieftain or a military commander. We note here that Chilbudius is not the only example of a high military commander of Antic origin in the imperial army. In the mid-sixth century Dabragezas is mentioned as *ταξίαρχος* (brigadier), and his son, Leontios, followed also a military career in Byzantium³³.

The second important evidence from the inscription is the date mentioned. According to the person who was dictating or writing the text, Chilbudius died on November 28 of the 7th indiction, which corresponds to the year 529 (as read by Ivanov) and not to 533, as we assume from Procopius' testimony. Ivanov had noted this difference, which he ascribed to a mistake by Procopius, because of his absence from the Balkans and his indirect information about the events through other people at that time³⁴, while other scholars, who do not identify general Chilbudius with Chilibudis of the inscription, suggested a later date in the 6th c., following the cycle of the 7th indiction (543/44, 558/59, 573/74 or 588/89)³⁵. It is very likely however that Chilbudius' last battle could have taken place on November 28. Regarding the year, it is true that in general the inscriptions are accurate. Could that be a mistake by Procopius then or in the inscription?

There are known cases in which errors happen. We could mention here that C. Mango and R. Scott have pointed out a certain dissention between Theophanes the Confessor and Ioannes Malalas about events which the first dates in 533 and the second in 529³⁶. Moreover, although Procopius is generally considered a very reliable source, it is not impossible that even he could be wrong about certain dates. This can be seen, for example, in

32. See above, n.1; cf. H. ELTON, *Military Forces*, in: *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Warfare*, ed. PH. SABIN, v. 2, Cambridge 2008, 300, who considers Chilbudius as a "second-generation Roman"; KARDARAS, *Άντες*, 106.

33. See CURTA, *Slavs*, 81, n. 28; KARDARAS, *Άντες*, 92-93.

34. IVANOV, *Nadpis na Khilvuda*, 65; that view shares also L. NIEDERLE, *Slovanské Starožitnosti*, v. 2.1, Prague 1906, 196, n. 2; for Procopius and his sources, see A. KARPOZILOS, *Βυζαντινοὶ Ἱστορικοὶ καὶ Χρονογράφοι*, v. 1, Athens 1997, 380-385; IVANOV – GINDIN – TSYMBURSKII, *Prokopii Kesariiskii*, 171-172; CURTA, *Slavs*, 37-38, 71, 332.

35. Cf. IVANOV – GINDIN – TSYMBURSKII, *Prokopii Kesariiskii*, 232; LITAVRIN, *O dvukh Khilbudakh*, 29, n. 18, who suggested that the inscription refers either to the phoney Chilbudius or to a third person, yet certainly of Antic (Slavic) origin.

36. C. MANGO – R. SCOTT, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor: Byzantine and Near Eastern History AD 284-813*, Oxford 1997, 285-307.

the division of Armenia and Procopius' mistake which is probably due to his (Armenian?) sources³⁷. On the other hand, Byzantine inscriptions may also contain mistakes regarding the date, in *indiction* or *Anno Mundi*³⁸. Consequently, in this case the information provided by the inscription's compiler should not be taken at face value because of a possible error in the date. Yet there is another, even more plausible solution, already mentioned above: that the mistake was committed by the person who tried to read and transcribe the inscription. Although the letters INA for the indiction are correct, what Ivanov has given as Σ must have actually been the Latin S, used as a sign of abbreviation after the INA and standing for *ινδ(ικτιωνος)*. As for the Z, which Ivanov rightly interpreted as "seven", this could, in fact, have been an I. In that period, it was not uncommon to put horizontal bars above, but sometimes both above and below the letter which was indicating the number of the indiction³⁹. In this case, and if one thinks that the line of the I might not have been entirely straight, a non-experienced eye would probably see either a Z or a Ξ (the latter option being excluded because there can be no such number for an indiction). If, then, the number was I, the correct year for the tenth indiction is 532.

Our approach shows that if indeed, as we believe, the tombstone belongs to Chilbudius the general, there is some inconsistency between Procopius' testimony and the inscription regarding the date. There can be several interpretations to this: a) Procopius himself, or some official informant, confused the year 532 with 533; b) Chilbudius was killed north of the Lower Danube on the 28th of November 532 and buried in Constantinople in early

37. G. GREATREX, *The Two Fifth-Century Wars Between Rome and Persia*, *Florilegium* 12 (1993), 6.

38. *Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua* XI, no. 113 (<http://mama.csad.ox.ac.uk/monuments/MAMA-XI-113.html>, access date: 2 March 2018). The editors suggest that the indiction is correct, while the *Anno Mundi* is wrong, but one can not know if this is true for every inscription; D. FEISSEL, *La réforme chronologique de 537 et son application dans l'épigraphie grecque*, in: *Documents, droit, diplomatique de l'Empire romain tardif*, ed. D. FEISSEL, Paris 2010, 509, n. 25 (also, 511, n. 38, for other mistakes of the engravers, as well as the comment of C. ZUCKERMAN in 517, no. 542).

39. See, for example, C. ASDRACHA, *Inscriptions protobyzantines et byzantines de la Thrace orientale et de l'île d'Imbros (IIIe-XVe siècles)*, Athens 2003, 312, no. 137 (Panion, 4th-6th c.); G. DAGRON - D. FEISSEL, *Inscriptions de Cilicie*, Paris 1987, no. 105, pl. XLIII (536 A.D.).

533, or c) there is another issue, a case similar to that of Theophanes and Malalas mentioned above. Be that as it may, we believe that our reading of the date in the inscription, the proximity of the years 532 and 533, as well as the mention of the name Sabbatius in the funerary inscription allow the attribution of the “unknown grave” to Chilbudius, *magister militum per Thraciam*.

ΕΠΙΤΥΜΒΙΑ ΕΠΙΓΡΑΦΗ ΤΟΥ ΧΙΛΒΟΥΔΙΟΥ, *MAGISTER MILITUM PER THRACIAM?*

Στηριζόμενοι στη σύντομη μαρτυρία του Προκόπιου για τον στρατηγό της Θράκης Χιλβούδιο (περ.530-533), η οποία διαφωτίζει τη σχέση του με τον οίκο του Ιουστινιανού και τις στρατιωτικές του ικανότητες, οι συγγραφείς εξετάζουν μία χαμένη επιτύμβια επιγραφή από την Κωνσταντινούπολη (“ΕΝΘΑΔΕ ΚΑΤΑ ΚΕΙΤΕ ΧΙΛΙΒΟΥΔΙC ΙΥΟC CΑΝΒΑΤΙΟΥ ΤΕΛΕΥΤΑ ΜΗΝΙ ΝΟΕΝΒΡΙΟΥ ΚΗ ΙΝΔΣΖ ΓΑΜΕΤΗ ΧΙ + ΛΙΒΟΥΔΙΟΥ). Δίνεται έμφαση σε γλωσσολογικά ζητήματα σχετικά με το όνομα Χιλβούδιος καθώς και τη χρονολόγηση της επιγραφής. Οι συγγραφείς αποδέχονται την αντική καταγωγή του Χιλβούδιου, αν και το όνομά του είναι μάλλον γερμανικό, και ότι υιοθετήθηκε από τον Σαββάτιο/Ιουστινιανό πριν από την άνοδο του τελευταίου στο θρόνο. Το γεγονός αυτό, σε συνάρτηση με την προτεινόμενη χρονολόγηση της επιγραφής το έτος 532/33, οδηγεί τους συγγραφείς στο συμπέρασμα ότι η επιγραφή είναι πολύ πιθανό να σχετίζεται με τον Χιλβούδιο *magister militum per Thraciam*.